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R 272032Z OCT 86
 FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2210

UNCLAS BOGOTA 15207

E.O. 12356: NA
 TAGS: EPET, PTER, CO
 SUBJECT: EXPLOSION ON NEIVA - LA DORADA OIL PIPELINE

REF: FBIS CHIVA CHIV 252241Z OCT 86

1. SUMMARY: EXPLOSION ON NEIVA - LA DORADA OIL PIPELINE REPORTED FBIS NEVER OCCURRED. DAMAGE CAUSED BY BUNGLING CRUDE OIL THIEVES. SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY CONFIRMED WITH ENRIQUE AMOROCHO, VICE PRESIDENT FOR REFINING AND TRANSPORT OF ECOPETROL, THAT BUNGLING OIL ROBBERS CAUSED THE OCTOBER 25 DAMAGE TO THE NEIVA - LA DORADA OIL PIPELINE, NEAR THE TOWN OF LERIDA, IN TOLIMA DEPARTMENT. TERRORIST ACTIVITY HAS BEEN RULED OUT.

3. THE THIEVES APPARENTLY TAPPED INTO THE CRUDE OIL PIPELINE IN ORDER TO STEAL CRUDE FROM ECOPETROL. UPON LEAVING THEY SIMPLY LET CRUDE OIL CONTINUE TO LEAK FROM THE SECTION OF PIPE THEY DAMAGED RESULTING IN SPILL OF ABOUT 150 THOUSAND BARRELS. MOST OF THE OIL HAS BEEN CLEANED UP. LOSSES ARE CONSIDERED BY ECOPETROL TO UNCLASSIFIED

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BE MAJOR. THE DAMAGE WILL TAKE SEVERAL DAYS TO REPAIR.
 GILLESPIE

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